Public Safety and Sour Gas
Annual Progress Report
2003

PS SG •INITIATIVE•
EUB • 2003

EUB Alberta Energy and Utilities Board

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Neil McCrank, EUB Chairman

Working

From the EUB Chairman: An Update on the Public Safety and Sour Gas Initiative

This has been an exceptionally busy year at the EUB as we continue to address the 87 recommendations of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Public Safety and Sour Gas, as well as undertaking our traditional role of ensuring that energy and utility development takes place in a manner that is safe and in the public interest. In last year's *Public Safety and Sour Gas (PS&SG) Annual Progress Report*, I stated that we are moving toward an improved regulatory framework that reflects a cooperative effort among stakeholders. I would like to build upon this thought and demonstrate that we are not only listening to the concerns expressed by Albertans regarding sour gas developments, but we are responding to those concerns through changes in the way we conduct our business and how we expect industry to conduct its business.

Before looking at the changes we have made so far, I want to express my appreciation to all our stakeholders for their contribution to the PS&SG initiative to date. We at the EUB are committed to an open process and truly value your input. Last year I stated that the changes we are making will result in a "fundamental cultural shift" in Alberta's sour gas industry. I am encouraged by industry's efforts to participate in the changes we are making, and I urge continued involvement as we continue to implement the recommendations. We are mindful of the demands that this project is placing on stakeholders, particularly the petroleum industry, not only through the implementation phase, but also beyond as changes in requirements and processes begin to take effect. We are endeavouring to make regulatory requirements clearer and more transparent by

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revising EUB guides, as well as incorporating new technologies and processes where possible. In the past I have stressed the importance of stakeholder consultation and the need for industry to more effectively consult with members of the public affected by energy development in their communities. But I believe it is much more than consultation that leads to responsible energy development—it is participation and involvement.

It is a fact that the sour gas industry impacts the land on which communities live and work, yet it also provides a significant contribution to the prosperity of the province as a whole. It is important to note that about one-third of Alberta's yearly natural gas production is sour gas, and this will likely increase in the future. By participating in open and honest discussions about energy development, both industry and the public can explore and further understand each other's interests. To facilitate this we have clarified our requirements for public involvement through a revision to EUB *Guide 56: Energy Development Applications and Schedules*. This is the document the petroleum industry must use for the thousands of facility, well, and pipeline licence applications that are made each year in Alberta. *Guide 56* requires that industry provide the public with opportunities to participate in projects, and I hope that the public will seize this opportunity to actively participate in discussions about energy developments that affect their communities. I believe it is possible for industry and the public to work together with the support of the EUB to address many of the issues to the benefit of all concerned.

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Active stakeholder participation is also being taken to new levels within Alberta through an increasing number of synergy groups, which bridge the gap between public expectation and regulation. I believe that the growth of synergy groups is, in part, a reflection of the existing stringent regulatory framework that provides the foundation for this dialogue. Through open-minded synergy groups it is possible to build trust and respect between industry and the local communities where sour gas activities are occurring. The EUB's commitment to "synergy" was exhibited last year when I and many of my staff participated in a Synergy Conference in Red Deer. A second Synergy Conference is planned for later this year, and the EUB will continue to be involved throughout the province in these types of initiatives.

In addition to supporting synergy groups, we have created other processes to help resolve issues between parties. I am pleased to report that the Appropriate Dispute Resolution (ADR) program continues to prove effective in resolving many energy development concerns in a constructive way. At times we all become entrenched in our positions. It takes commitment to step back and look at the interests of the other parties: ADR assists participants in taking this step.

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Evolution of the EUB's Regulatory Framework

The EUB mandate is built upon comprehensive legislation through which we derive our stringent requirements. The Advisory Committee concluded that Alberta's current regulatory system allows sour gas activities to occur in a manner that is safe, but also stated that improvements must be made. I listened to the concerns of Albertans and pledged my commitment to address all of the 87 recommendations. In doing so, I believe that many of the issues and concerns we heard are being and will continue to be resolved.

Much of the work we are doing today exceeds the initial intent of the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee and inevitably has an effect on non-sour gas areas of our business as well. Many of the projects have expanded, not only because we want to continue to be a leader in regulatory excellence, but as a result of encouragement from our diverse range of stakeholders. As we continue to address the recommendations, we are also seeing emerging linkages between groups of recommendations and we are taking every opportunity to improve our processes as much as possible. For example, we are working towards a coordinated strategy for stakeholder involvement in PS&SG projects that will make for more effective use of everyone's time.

It is not only our regulations that are evolving at a rapid pace, but also the way we interact within the EUB itself. I have seen synergies developing across our traditional branch structure, and I have watched as the teams involved have taken pride of ownership for the recommendations they have been tasked with satisfying. I believe this transformation within the EUB itself will ensure that the investment that Albertans have made in this project will continue to be realized in the future.

Status of the 87 Recommendations

It has been two years since we started to address the 87 recommendations, and I am proud of the progress we have made to date. We have achieved what we said we were going to do. However, without the help of all our stakeholders this would not have been possible. Today the challenge the EUB and our stakeholders face is to maintain this impetus and commitment throughout the remainder of the PS&SG initiative so that we achieve all of our goals. I believe that collective actions involving all stakeholders will lead to better holistic solutions for the benefit of all Albertans and the society in which we live.

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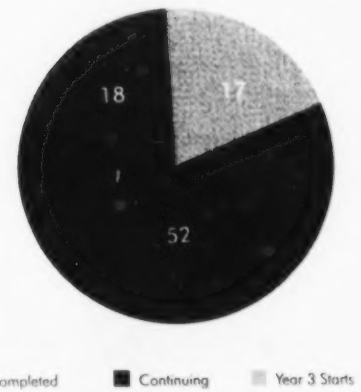

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A Pause for Reflection

In July 2002, the Advisory Committee evaluated our progress in addressing the recommendations and provided constructive identification of areas for improvement. I would like to thank the members for their support. I truly believe that continued involvement of the Advisory Committee is vital in ensuring a successful outcome, and we look forward to again receiving the evaluation of our progress over this past year.

Overall the Advisory Committee was "extremely pleased" and "amazed" with what we had achieved so far. However, areas were identified where we needed to revise our strategy and we immediately took steps to do so. As part of our ongoing work, we now actively seek input from members of the Advisory Committee to ensure that we are accomplishing our shared goals. We continue to make available our public updates at open houses, through our field centres, and on our Web site, which we are in the process of improving.

The Advisory Committee also commented on the need to see an improvement in the area of performance measures to ensure that implementation actions fulfill the intents of the recommendations. Throughout the project we have asked ourselves, "How do we know whether we are successful?" While we can measure such activities as the number of inspections we do or our timeliness in responding to complaints, true success involves building confidence in the EUB and the regulatory framework it administers. The EUB is obligated to ensure that energy development takes place in a manner that is fair and in the public interest—no easy feat when there are competing interests involved. It is an impressive statistic that we are currently continuing work on 52 recommendations and have completed work on 18 others. I truly believe we are making excellent progress. However, success can only be realized when the changes made to the regulatory framework can be shown to have addressed the concerns raised by Albertans. To measure our success we are developing a framework that will be based on both qualitative and quantitative measures. Make no mistake: if we discover that we are not being effective, then we will change our processes until we are successful.

We continue to work on projects within five different categories, and once again I have highlighted some of the accomplishments.

Health Effects and Sour Gas Research

Alberta Health and Wellness has continued to work on addressing the health-related recommendations. In October 2002 the department published the report *Health Effects Associated With Short-Term Exposure to Low Levels of Hydrogen Sulphide*. This document supports the ongoing work to define a toxicology-based health end point that will be used in the new EUB requirements for calculating emergency planning zones and evacuation criteria. Work also continues on a similar study to review the health effects associated with sulphur dioxide (SO_2), again for application in new EUB requirements.

Successful field tests of the prototype personal hydrogen sulphide (H_2S) exposure monitor have been undertaken, paving the way for a practical portable device. This new technology will be capable of measuring very low levels (parts per billion) of H_2S.

I commend Alberta Health and Wellness for the work it has been doing to assist the EUB in addressing the Advisory Committees recommendations. This is just one example where government bodies are working together to resolve the concerns of Albertans.

Sour Gas Development Planning and Approval

Many of the concerns Albertans have expressed involve the planning, approval, and potential proliferation of energy developments. Much work has been undertaken this past year to address these concerns.

A proposal has been developed and discussed with many stakeholders that would define new EUB requirements and expectations for the submission of project and pool development plans, including options for using existing infrastructure. I am pleased to report that there is general support for increased disclosure of planning information to the public, but a number of issues remain to be resolved before the proposal can be finalized. Over the coming months the EUB will continue to work with stakeholders to resolve issues, with a final proposal in place hopefully by late summer or early fall.

Senior provincial government representatives are now working to improve the coordination between surface developments and subsurface developments to extract sour gas near people. I now cochair with the Deputy Minister for the Department of Energy a taskforce comprising deputy ministers of other government departments. Our role is to provide strategic direction to a working-level committee tasked with investigating ways of improving the coordination between these two valuable resources, the surface and subsurface. We also have the mandate to consider the recommendations brought forward by the working level committee and then implement these recommendations through the respective government departments.

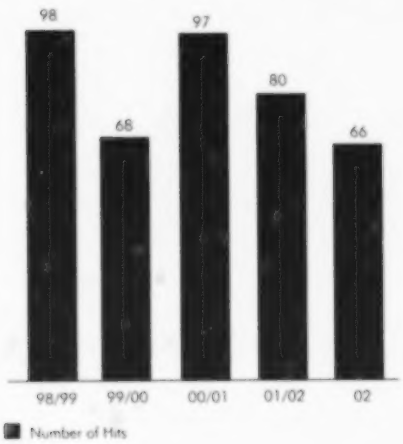
We have also engaged in significant cooperation with provincial and federal government health departments and regional health authorities (RHAs) to develop a protocol that provides for their early input into EUB policies related to sour gas and public health and safety. The protocol also provides for early and effective involvement of RHAs in the preparation of emergency response plans for select sour gas licence applications.

Sour Gas Operations

Many Albertans voiced concerns over the integrity of pipelines carrying sour gas. The EUB has always taken pipeline integrity seriously, and before the PS&SG initiative began there was significant work under way. We have already developed and published a pipeline inspection manual, implemented an inspection policy for sour gas pipelines, and worked with the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) technical committee on sour gas pipeline standards. A formal review of the pipeline inspection manual and policy is presently under way, and the EUB continues to work with the CSA to improve standards to prevent corrosion of sour gas pipelines.

We are also in the process of revising the Pipeline Regulation to require mandatory participation in Alberta One-Call for all pipeline operators under the EUB's jurisdiction to help prevent third-party damage.

Pipeline Contact Damage by Third Parties



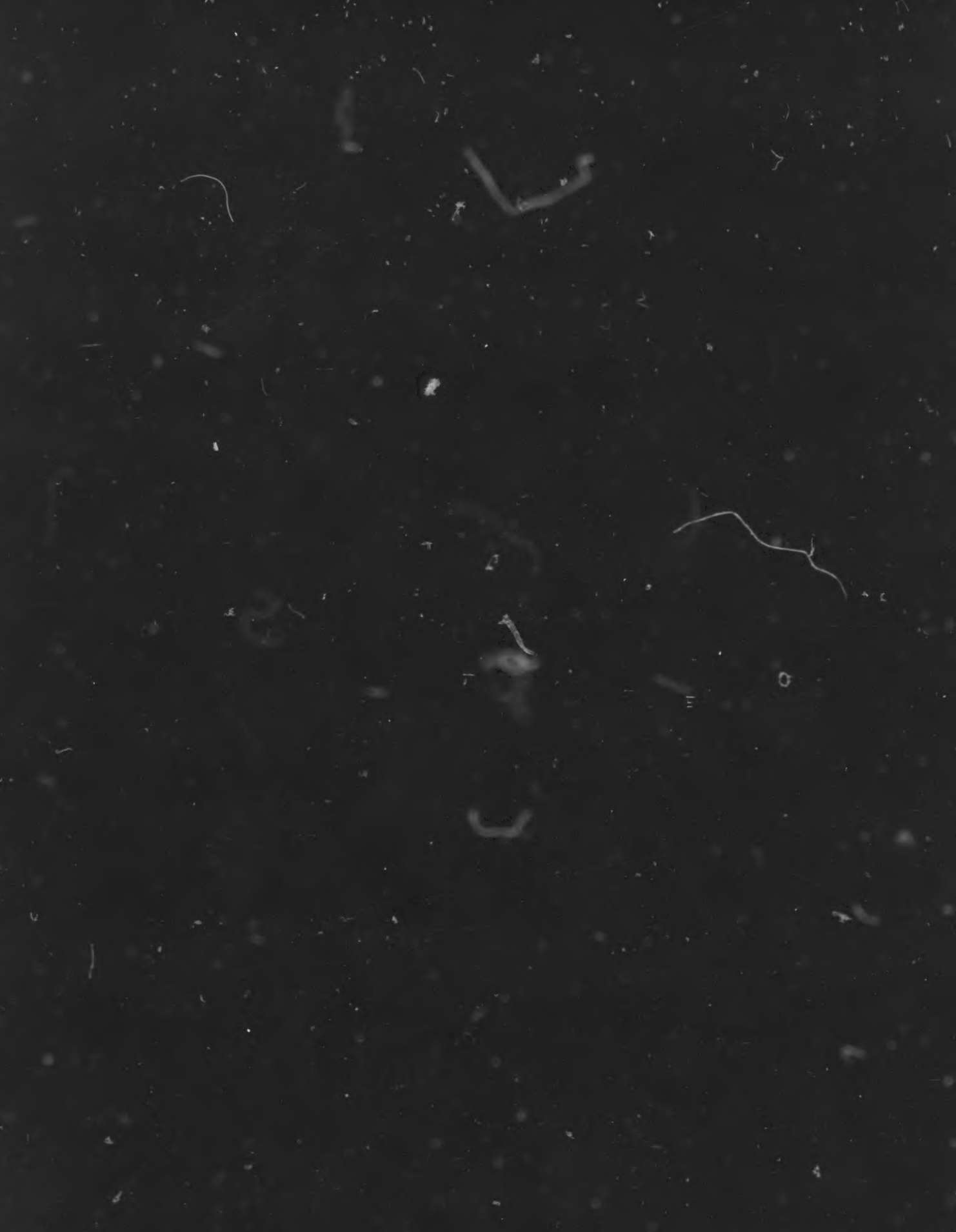
Emergency Preparedness

Much work has been undertaken to improve the already comprehensive emergency preparedness measures we have in place. We are placing more emphasis on demonstrating emergency response capability and have developed an audit protocol to test responder's abilities. We plan to pilot the draft protocol to gather information from stakeholders before its broad implementation. The process will allow the EUB to more effectively record compliance and take appropriate action to protect public safety.

We have introduced the Incident Response and Reporting Protocol (IRRP) to ensure timely EUB response, investigation, enforcement, reporting, and follow-up of upstream petroleum incidents. This protocol will also serve as the model for a new draft proposal that the EUB will present to other government agencies for follow-up in the event of a major incident to determine the impacts and identification of post-incident opportunities for improved response.

Many of the EUB emergency preparedness requirements have now been consolidated into

In spring 2003, the EUB will issue the new Guide 71: Emergency Preparedness and Response Requirements for the Upstream Petroleum Industry, which is mainly a consolidation of existing emergency preparedness requirements.



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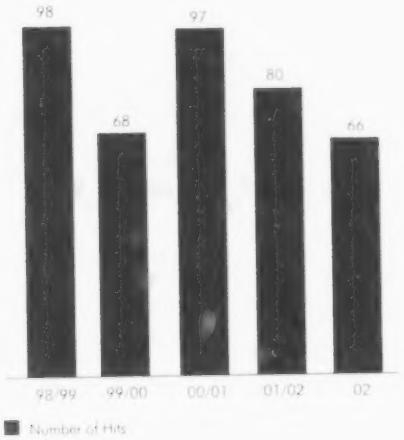

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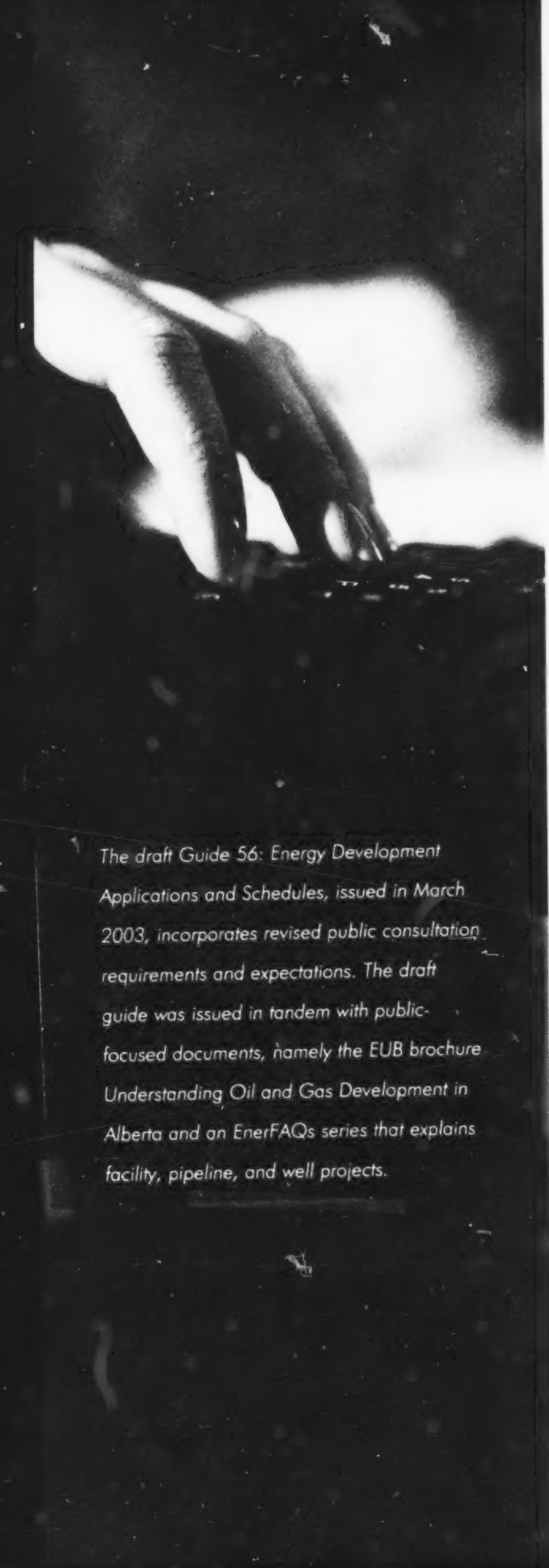


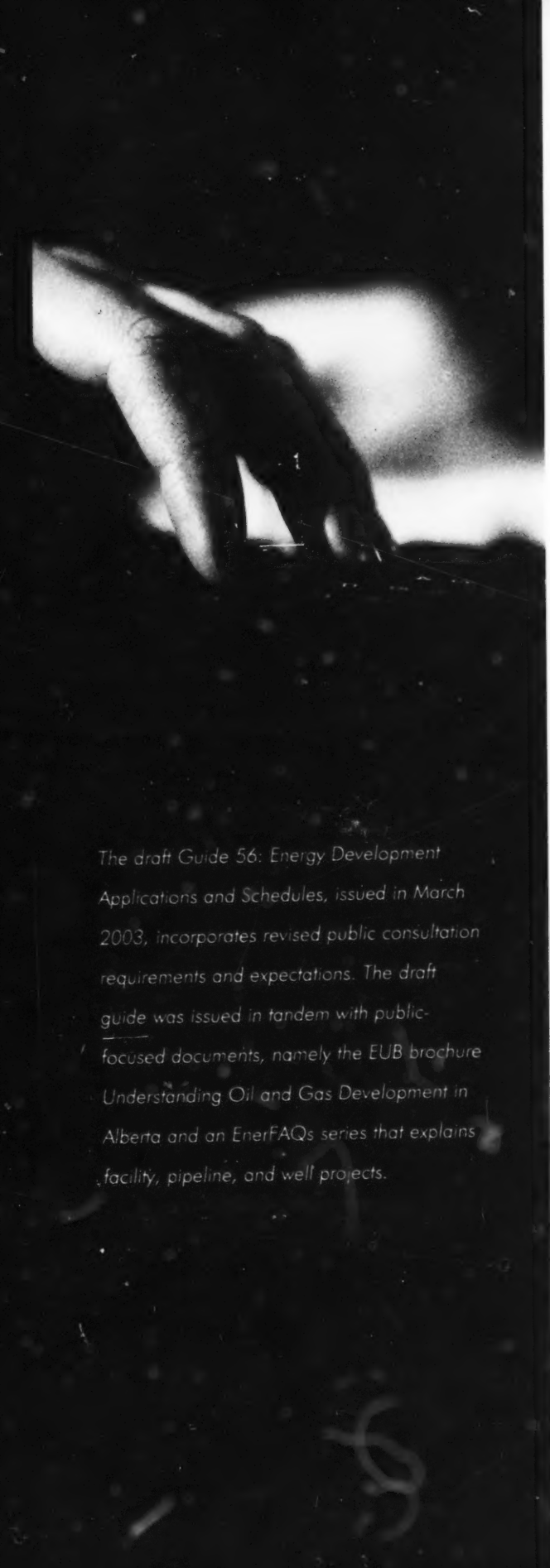
The draft Guide 56: Energy Development Applications and Schedules, issued in March 2003, incorporates revised public consultation requirements and expectations. The draft guide was issued in tandem with public-focused documents, namely the EUB brochure Understanding Oil and Gas Development in Alberta and an EnerFAQs series that explains facility, pipeline, and well projects.

Guide 71: Emergency Preparedness and Response Requirements for the Upstream Petroleum Industry. This new guide will be published in spring 2003 and will eventually incorporate many of the other initiatives under way. We are continuing to develop the new requirements for calculating emergency planning zones and are working closely with Emergency Management Alberta to develop an effective sheltering policy to complement evacuation requirements. A study is also under way to review industry's capability to ignite an uncontrolled sour gas release from a well.

We have assessed the provincial capability to monitor air quality in the event of a sour gas release and have developed an air monitoring protocol for EUB staff to consistently gather, record, and analyze air monitoring results. Our new air monitoring inspection guide details quality assurance and quality control calibration procedures for EUB staff using air monitoring equipment.

Information, Communication, and Consultation

We have invested considerable effort in improving the availability of EUB information and how it is communicated. We have published a new brochure *Understanding Oil and Gas Developments in Alberta*, which includes a list of questions to ask if you are affected by an energy development proposal. We continue to expand our series of EnerFAQs pamphlets, which provide information on various energy development topics. We are also revising and improving our Web site to ensure that the public can more easily obtain information, as well as making more use of visual media, such as videos on the role of the EUB. We are mindful of our younger stakeholders



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and have developed the EUBKidZone Web site and the *Petroleum Play* booklet, which has been widely distributed to schools.

The EUB is committed to providing unbiased decisions with respect to energy developments. We have implemented a three-year strategic communications strategy, which focuses on public perception of the EUB's neutrality, our role in regulating the energy industry, and our commitment to ensure public safety. This year about 40 per cent of our funding will come from government, with the remainder coming from a tax-like, involuntary levy, we impose on industry. We plan to encourage the government to move further toward an equal funding split over the next few years.

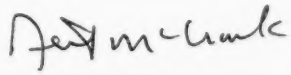
A Look Forward

I have reported on the significant progress made to date by the EUB and our stakeholders in addressing the 87 recommendations of the Advisory Committee. As we move into year three, the PS&SG initiative remains one of the top priorities of the EUB, and once again, we have an aggressive action plan. We intend to start the remaining 17 recommendations, as we promised to do at the beginning of this significant project. I believe we are entering the most difficult phase of the initiative, because as well as new starts, we are engaged in a tremendous amount of ongoing work. Therefore, the challenge will be to complete some of these projects over the coming months. Many of the recommendations we are about to start have been reliant on some of the other recommendations, and many will be very difficult to address because of their complexity. However, I remain committed and I am pleased to report that funding has been secured for continuing with this work, as well as increasing the EUB staff complement to ensure that we have the skilled resources to undertake the necessary effort.

Many of the concerns that the Advisory Committee heard as its members travelled the province suggested that some of the public view the EUB as being biased in favour of industry and industrial development. As Chairman of the EUB, this perception particularly concerned me. I hope through our commitment and the actions we are taking to address the recommendations, we are demonstrating that we do regulate the energy industry in a manner that is fair and in the public interest.

To the EUB, public safety is fundamental, and the streamlining of the regulations will assist the sour gas industry to fully understand and comply with our requirements. We are building processes that record violations of our regulations and we are putting strict measures in place to enforce these regulations. Sour gas is undeniably a very valuable resource for the province of Alberta, but it must be extracted by licensees that are responsible, well trained, and willing to engage and address public concerns through active participation. The synergies that the PS&SG initiative is helping to forge will, I hope, continue to be the model to move forward into more harmonious energy development—be it sour or non-sour, or even other forms of energy beyond the oil patch.

To conclude, I would like to invite you to provide feedback on the PS&SG initiative. Once again, I thank all our stakeholders for assisting in addressing the recommendations. Without your involvement, our task would be much more difficult.



Neil McCrank
EUB Chairman

Project Status By Recommendation Category

Category	#	Recommendation Subject	Completed	Continuing	Y3 Starts
Health Effects and Sour Gas Research	9, 59	Health effects information for H_2S and SO_2			
	10, 11	Develop sour gas research strategies			
	12	Establish coordinated, consistent medical response to H_2S exposure			
	13	Establish high-level sour gas exposure registry to track high-level H_2S exposure			◆
	67	Develop personal H_2S exposure monitors			
Sour Gas Development Planning and Approval	1, 2, 84	The EUB work with other agencies to ensure that gaps in regulation and areas of overlap regarding the impact of sour gas on public safety are handled efficiently			◆
	5	Taskforce investigation of improved surface/subsurface planning			
	6	Plant proliferation	✓		
	7, 32, 33	Require applicants to consider use of existing sour gas infrastructure and to submit information on possible future development with well applications where sour gas is involved near people			
	17-19	Standardize dispersion and risk assessment modelling			
	20	Consolidate sour gas regulatory requirements into a concise summary document			◆
	34	EUB/government/agency coordinated policy and application review			
	35	Critical well prelicence review	✓		
	36	Licence application training/certification information requirement	✓		
	38, 41-44	EUB hearings and decisions			
	39, 40	Rewrite *Guide 29* and make hearings user friendly			
Sour Gas Operations	8	Soften the visual impact and impression of sour facilities			
	21	Review requirements for older sour gas pipelines; ensure that there is adequate attention to corrosion failures			
	22	Review adequacy of third-party damage prevention for sour pipelines			
	23	Review requirements for approving the reclassification of sweet gas facilities to sour service and for reactivating older sour wells			◆
	24	Publicize requirements to convert existing pipelines to sour service			
	25	Increase sour gas inspections	✓		
	26	Increase inspections of new and noncompliant operators	✓		
	27	Implement 100% inspection rate for complaint response/compliance	✓		
	28	Response to sour gas complaints	✓		
	30	Accelerated enforcement where noncompliance threatens health and safety			
	49	Ensure that EUB sour gas related requirements continually reflect appropriate technology and practices			◆
	50	Ensure Alberta's sour gas workers have appropriate safety training			◆
	52, 53	Setback and setback implication review of surface development			
	68	Enhance EUB capability to monitor for complaint response/compliance	✓		
	78	Encourage the development of mutual aid agreements where there are multiple operators in an area			◆
	85	Complaint/incident response programs for Aboriginal communities	✓		

Project Status By Recommendation Category Continued

Category	#	Recommendation Subject	Completed	Continuing	Y3 Starts
Emergency Preparedness	15	Follow-up on major releases		☐	
	54, 60, 61	Interim policy on ERP review and reduced EPZs	☐		
	55, 56	Assess capability to implement ERP and increase ERP audits/tests		☐	
	57, 63, 64	ERP guide and requirements to coordinate responder roles		☐	
	58, 62	Review process for defining EPZ, require that ERPs show H_2S/SO_2		☐	
	65	Capability to monitor significant release events	☐		
	66	Clarify and coordinate monitoring roles and responsibilities		☐	
	87	Infrastructure/resources for Aboriginal community ERP	☐		
Information, Communication, and Consultation	3	EUB/IOGC/INAC/First Nations jurisdictional issues		☐	
	4	Create document and summary brochure outlining sour gas and public health and safety roles and responsibilities			◆
	14	Increase awareness in First Nations communities about the agencies responsible for sour gas health services			◆
	16	Review, organize, and enhance access to EUB data		☐	
	29	Field staff in industry-landowner discussion	☐		
	31	Increase the availability of information regarding enforcement actions		☐	
	37	EUB involvement in mediation of application issues	☐		
	45-47	Perception of EUB's neutrality		☐	
	48	EUB funding	☐		
	51	Ensure industry uses best practices in sour gas development			◆
	69, 70-72, 74	Establish EUB public consultation staff resource team		☐	
	73	Establish EUB information office		☐	
	75	Increase public awareness and understanding of sour gas issues, provide information about EUB to Albertans			◆
	76	Increase public awareness and understanding of sour gas issues, provide information on technical matters to Albertans			◆
	77	EUB Field Centres provide information on key operator contacts, telephone numbers, and facility locations to the public			◆
	79	Determine local benefits from sour gas development		☐	
	80	Effectively contact/establish ongoing relationships with all Albertans			◆
	81	Develop public materials re: role of EUB (CD-ROM, videos)		☐	
	82	Improve communications in isolated communities among First Nations, EUB and industry operators			◆
	83	EUB consider forming an Aboriginal advisory committee		☐	
	86	Timely/meaningful public consultation for First Nations/Metis			
		Totals	**18**	**52**	**17**
			Completed	**Continuing**	**Y3 Starts**

* All 87 recommendations to be started by April 2004

Information Requests

Please direct all information requests on Public Safety and Sour Gas to one of the EUB contact numbers below:

Information Services	(403) 297-8190
Library	(403) 297-8242
Public Safety Implementation Team	(403) 297-3726

Marilyn Craig (403) 297-3194
Gary Neilson (403) 297-8552
email: eub.publicsafety@gov.ab.ca

EUB Provincial Field Centres

Calgary Head Office (403) 297-8311

Northern Field Centres

Bonnyville	(780) 826-5352
Drayton Valley	(780) 542-5182
Grande Prairie	(780) 538-5138
St. Albert	(780) 460-3800

Southern Field Centres

Midnapore	(403) 297-8303
Medicine Hat	(403) 527-3385
Red Deer	(403) 340-5454
Wainwright	(780) 842-7570